

Wisconsin Governor's Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

MEETING MINUTES

March 10, 2017

10:00AM

Room 751

1 W. Wilson Street, Madison, WI 53703

Members present: Nicole Everson (Chair), Denise Johnson (Vice Chair), Tom O'Connor (Secretary), Steve Smart, Lisa Woods and Karl Nollenberger,

Members excused: David Seligman

Ex-Officio members: Billy Mauldin

Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) Staff: Amber Mullett (Social Services Supervisor) and Mason Aumanstal (Assistive Technology Program Coordinator)

Sign Language Interpreters: Chantel Wiedmeyer (DHS) and Amy Fryman (PIE)

Communication Access Real-Time Translation Service Provider: Margo Lucas

Technical Assistance and Livestream Technician: Dustin Mullett

Chair called the meeting to order at 10:11 AM

Approval of the March 10, 2017 Agenda: Karl Nollenberger motioned to approve the agenda as provided (Steve Smart seconded).

Passed: unanimously.

Community Updates: Tom O'Connor noted that the Disability Advocacy Day was coming up later in March and also stated that Wisconsin Association of the Deaf is hosting a Legislative Day in April. Steve Smart confirmed that the date of the Deaf Legislative Day is April 19th. Denise Johnson noted that the Deaf Legislative Day event will be held at the Capitol. Last year's event was a success, but there have been gaps in years where the event did not take place.

Motion: Tom O'Connor moved to amend the Agenda to remove the break in order to receive an update from ODHH (Lisa Woods Seconded).

Passed: unanimously

ODHH Update: Amber Mullett from ODHH provided an update to the Governor's Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (council), per the council's request.

Emergency Preparedness: The Office of Preparedness and Emergency Health Care (OPEHC) in the Division of Public Health (DPH) has been working to improve communication access to Emergency related messages. ODHH has been working with staff from OPEHC to provide the Disaster Response Interpreter (DRI) training for licensed interpreters in the state of Wisconsin. This training was developed in California and the curriculum is being used in several other states. ODHH will continue to work with OPEHC to sustain this program. ODHH staff interpreters will be traveling to California in March to begin the “train the trainer” process in order to offer this training on an ongoing basis in Wisconsin.

Deaf Yoga Pilot: The Southern Regional Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist, Bette Mentz-Powell is collaborating with the Aging and Disability Resource Centers of Southern Wisconsin and Dane to pilot a Yoga program for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind. The yoga course is based off the evidence-based falls prevention intervention that has been used throughout Wisconsin. The class will be led by a registered Yoga instructor and accommodations will be made available for participants (such as CART, sign language interpreters, hearing loop technology, etc.).

Telecommunication Assistance Program: The update for administrative rule Chapter DHS 78 for the Telecommunications Assistance program (TAP) continues. When the process is complete, an economic impact will be finalized and a report will be sent to the legislature.

Regional Staff Updates: Jennifer Anderson, the Regional Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist for the Northwest region will begin travelling to Stevens Point for office at the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). The Deaf and Hard of Hearing specialists are encouraged to make similar arrangements with their local ADRCs and Independent Living Centers (ILCs). Amber Mullett indicated that it would be possible to have all staff at an upcoming Governor’s Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing meeting if the Council had specific questions or suggestions.

Stakeholder Meetings: Carrie Molke, BADR Director and Amber Mullett continue to meet with the presidents of the Wisconsin Association of the Deaf (WAD) and the Wisconsin Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) on an ongoing basis.

Strategic Plan: ODHH is working on a strategic plan much like the one that Council developed. The strategic plan will emphasize the Division strategic priorities: public health leadership, forging and strengthening key partnerships, promoting informed decisions and ensuring a strong workforce and business practices.

Leadership and Advocacy Training: Amber also noted that partners within the Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources (BADR) have a leadership and advocacy training. Individuals that are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blind will be likely candidates for this training.

Board for Evaluating Interpreters and the Wisconsin Interpreting and

Transliterating Assessment: The council inquired about an update to the Board for Evaluating Interpreters (BEI) and asked if the Wisconsin Interpreting and Transliterating Assessment (WITA) was still being observed as an evaluation tool. Amber Mullett stated that the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) (the statewide entity that oversees sign language interpreter licensing) is currently accepting BEI in addition to the WITA for licensure. Amber Mullett has reached out to Lori Breslow from the DARS Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) to follow up on the status of the BEI contract, and will be meeting via tele-conference soon. Amber Mullett clarified that when the BEI is established in Wisconsin, the WITA will be phased out, but not until we have a valid replacement for interpreters.

Website Update: Amber Mullett confirmed that ODHH is working on updating and revamping their website. The goal is that the website communications work for all consumers.

The council took a break at 10:59 AM.

Meeting reconvened at 11:09 AM.

BADR Update: Carrie Molke provided a BADR update to the council.

Staffing Update: Carrie Molke indicated that the Bureau is looking at ways to strengthen administration and collaboration of disability related functions within BADR. The Office for the Promotion of Independent Living (OPIL) Section is being created to act as an umbrella of administrative support for programs and services for people with hearing loss, vision loss, physical and developmental/intellectual disabilities. OPIL will be overseeing transportation, employment, Assistive Technology and Independent Living initiatives. There will still be an Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired and an Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. These offices will experience little change -- other than improved administration and collaboration. Once this reorganization is complete, vacancy filling will occur, including the ODHH director. Carrie Molke noted that ODHH staff have taken up more duties in the absence of the director. The council asked if it's possible that ODHH would not be moving forward with a director in place and rather have ODHH staff report to a director that oversees multiple offices. Carrie Molke reiterated that we will be hiring a director for ODHH and looking for ways to integrate our disability programs within the OPIL Section. Carrie Molke confirmed that she and Amber Mullett will remain the contact person for bureau and office related questions and concerns.

Deaf-Blind Position: The council inquired as to the status of the Deaf-Blind position that was previously under recruitment. Carrie Molke stated that there was a recruitment process, but after offering the job to the top candidate, the candidate declined the position. This caused BADR to reevaluate whether this position was needed or whether an effort could move forward utilizing current OBVI and ODHH staff. At the end of the

year, it is expected that ODHH/OBVI will begin an initiative to improve access and services for this population.

The council asked if other states were being looked at as a potential model that a Deaf-Blind Specialist could play in ODHH. Amber Mullett confirmed that other models are being explored, but we often find that other models don't fit our State. One reason is that we are one of only a few states that have a county-based system while others have a State model of service delivery. The council inquired as to why we have a county-based system. Carrie Molke indicated that we have a long history of operating programs on a local level where services are provided as close to the actual community served as possible.

Governor's Budget: Carrie Molke also discussed the Governor's budget that was released in mid-February. She discussed the budget process, which includes action by both the senate and house within the legislature. So, the initiatives in the Governor's budget are subject to change. Carrie Molke indicated that there are no specific initiatives for BADR-related programs, however, there are some aging and disability related proposals that may be of interest. These include: (1) eliminating waiting lists for the Children's Long-term Support Waiver programs; (2) Medical Assistance Purchase Plan (MAPP) reform; (3) nursing home and personal care agency rate increases; (4) funding for Medicaid and SeniorCare; (5) Ombudsman Services for the IRIS program; (6) dementia research funding; and (7) a specialized transportation funding increase.

The council noted that there is a concern that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Include, Respect, I Self-Direct (IRIS) program would be eliminated and inquired as to how that will affect Wisconsin. Carrie Molke noted that there are additional changes that may be coming from the federal level. The IDEA is federal law. IRIS is a Medicaid Waiver program, and there are discussions happening at the federal level that could impact Medicaid. There may be changes to these programs, but Carrie Molke clarified that she has not heard discussion about eliminating these programs altogether and that that is unlikely to happen.

Carrie Molke stated that the transition to a new Division within the Department has been going smoothly. BADR has learned a lot about public health and Carrie Molke feels the Division is a good fit for people served by the Bureau. Carrie Molke shared the four strategic priorities of the Division, which are: public health leadership, forging and strengthening key partnerships, promoting informed decisions and ensuring a strong workforce and business practices. There are a number of initiatives and projects underway within the Division that the Bureau is engaged in.

Motion: Nicole Everson moved to amend the agenda to reconvene from lunch early (Steve Smart Seconded).

Passed: unanimously

Lunch break at 12:00 until

Meeting reconvened at 12:45

Old Business

Bylaws: David Seligman, Tom O'Connor and Denise Johnson previously worked on reviewing and updating the bylaws for the council. Denise Johnson will finalize the proposed edits and will have a copy for the council at the next meeting. Further, Nicole Everson suggests that a sub-committee be formed. Denise Johnson agreed but noted that it should be a smaller group.

Discussion of Wisconsin Institute on Law and Liberty's Licensing Report: The council discussed the letter that Lisa Woods drafted and that was submitted to the council before the meeting. The council reviewed the letter and agreed that it should be sent on council letterhead with the Chair person, Nicole Everson's contact information. In the letter, Collin Roth of the Wisconsin Institute on Law and Liberty (WILL) was invited to a council meeting to discuss the need for interpreter licensure. Steve Smart noted that the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform that has received the report and it was recommended that a similar letter be sent to this committee to discuss the need for interpreter licensure.

Motion: Steve Smart motioned to allow Denise Johnson, Lisa Woods and Steve Smart to draft and send a letter to the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform that highlights the need for sign language interpreter licensing (Lisa Woods seconded).

Passed: unanimously

Visor Communication Card: The council developed a visor communication card that allows Deaf and Hard of Hearing motorists to communicate using pictures; the council gave ownership of the document to ODHH. The council inquired if these cards were going to be printed for the regional staff. Amber Mullett noted that the Office would like to see a few changes made to the existing card including: a disclaimer that indicates the use of the card does not waive someone's right to effective communication. Amber Mullett also stated that the Office is considering developing a training for law enforcement and the public on the use of this card. The council advised that an image that represents a weapon should be added. Amber Mullett mentioned that there was a recent Department of Justice settlement that mentioned the Wisconsin Communication Card.

Council Website Logo: The council stated that this discussion started quite a while back with no resolution. The previous Director for the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing indicated that he would need to discuss the new logo with DHS legal partners. Amber Mullett mentioned that this discussion relates to the later presentation from the Bureau related to how BADR is working with and supporting councils. The council agreed and tabled discussion.

Strategic Planning: At the previous meeting, the council worked to develop their strategic plan. The plan was provided to the council as a draft. The council decided to

table the discussion of how to proceed with the plan for the next council meeting. Time would be provided on the agenda to discuss the strategic plan. The plan with recommended edits could be made available and placed on the Council website.

Motion: Steve Smart motioned the specific dates be removed from the strategic plan, update the draft to final form and post the plan on the website (Karl Nollenberger seconded).

Passed: unanimously.

New Business

Staff Support to Councils Presentation: Monica Smith from BADR provided a presentation to the council that outlines an updated process for how BADR staff supports and assists councils. The Statutory Council on Blindness (SCOB), the Governor's Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Council on Physical Disabilities (CPD), the Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities (GCPD), the Aging Advisory Council and the Assistive Technology Advisory Board. The goal of this work was to help define the level of staff support for each council as well as provide a uniformed executive structure for all of them. Staff will coordinate council work in the following areas: meeting planning and preparation, development of tools and templates for council use, manage the council websites, support external communications, and will provide technical assistance to the council. The project will further ensure that councils are following executive orders, by-laws and legislative orders. Monica Smith stated that she is seeking input and feedback from the councils and the goal is to have these items developed and implemented by the end of June by a committee of BADR staff.

Deaf Commission Presentation: Katie Voss and Mike Maffucci from the Wisconsin Association of the Deaf, Deaf Commission Committee provided a presentation to the Council. This presentation outlined the need for the commission and discussed the changes that would occur for the 500,000 Deaf or hard of hearing residents of Wisconsin if the state was to adopt the commission. The presentation was provided via PowerPoint (copies of the presentation were not provided to the council). Katie and Mike noted that people are frustrated with ODHH because they are often referred somewhere else. The commission proposal is intending to stream-line and improve the quality of services provided to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities of Wisconsin. It was also stated that the commission would eliminate ODHH as well as the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Katie Voss and Mike Maffucci also raised the following concerns:

- They dislike the ODHH logo
- They feel that there is no transparency in ODHH
- The unemployment rate for the Deaf is over 45%
- The Council has no power and ODHH has limited impact
- There is a lack of communication since ODHH stopped using ODHH Net, a communication tool
- ODHH is unable to provide advocacy to consumers
- ODHH does not seek public participation

- ODHH has no specialized positions
- The proposed Commission would work with all interpreters and would act as a warehouse
- The WAD commission proposal is following the example similar programs set up in Arizona, Kentucky, Minnesota and Massachusetts

Katie Voss and Mike Maffucci also stated that the proposed Commission would have direct contact with legislators and will be able to lobby on behalf of the Deaf community.

After the presentation, Carrie Molke stated that many of the things presented did not accurately reflect the work that ODHH and the Council does and is concerned that the way that the information is being portrayed creates a false sense of urgency. Carrie noted that four of the eight ODHH employees are Deaf in response to a suggestion that ODHH does not do enough to hire the Deaf. According to Carrie, most of the information about ODHH in the presentation is not accurate. There are many important things happening within ODHH and the Bureau that might not be understood and Carrie feels that increasing communication with the Deaf community is important so that people have accurate information. Carrie further advised that individuals are encouraged to reach out to ODHH with questions or concerns. Carrie has regular meetings with the President and members of the Wisconsin Association of the Deaf (WAD) and she feels like communication would be strengthened if the information from these meetings was shared with WAD members. Further, the council noted that the presentation places emphasis only on the Deaf community and not the Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind communities; the goal should be to empower all communities.

Denise Johnson noted that there should be something similar to ODHH Net and would like to see a Vlog signed by an individual that is Deaf so that ODHH has direct communication with the community. The Council also noted that it would be wise for the Council to have a presence on the Commission committee. It was also noted that the Commission should consider a Deaf-Blind representative as well as an HLAA representative. Finally, to address communication, the Council has previously indicated an interest in creating a social-media presence.

Announcements and Public Comments: The council recognizes the need to develop stronger partnerships with WAD, HLAA and the Deaf-Blind advocates.

Motion: Karl Nollenberger motioned to adjourn the meeting (Lisa Woods seconded).

Passed: unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:14 P.M.